



## OFFICE OF THE NAGORNO KARABAKH REPUBLIC

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### AZERBAIJAN CONTINUES TO MANIPULATE WITH THE EVENTS OF KHOJALY

*Factsheet mostly based on Azerbaijani sources*

Decades after February 1992 so-called Khojaly events, Azerbaijan's President Aliyev and his government continue to obstinately falsify the events and fan anti-Armenian propaganda.

When in 1991 Azerbaijan launched full-scale military aggression against the fledgling democracy of the Republic of Artsakh, the Khojaly area was turned into Azerbaijani military stronghold for indiscriminate shelling of Stepanakert and other cities. Suppressing those firing positions became an existential issue for tens of thousands civilians. Various records, including acknowledgements by Azeri officials reiterate that the Khojaly events have been orchestrated by Azerbaijan's Popular Front political force, and used as a factor for struggle for power in Azerbaijan.

Here are few of the testimonies by Azerbaijani officials and journalists disproving the claims:

- **Then-president of Azerbaijan, Ayaz Mutalibov, who became victim of the political intrigues by the Popular Front, admitted in an interview to various newspapers that "...the assault on Khojaly was not a surprise attack"<sup>1</sup>, and has confirmed that "a corridor was left available by the Armenians for (Khojaly) people to leave"<sup>2</sup>;**
- **This fact was later reiterated by president Mutalibov, who linked this crime with, eventually successful, attempts by the opposition to remove him from presidency<sup>2</sup>. In his more recent interview to another daily, Mutalibov has confirmed his earlier statement: "The shooting of the Khojaly residents was obviously organized by someone to take control in Azerbaijan"<sup>3</sup>;**
- **Late president of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev, father of the current president Ilham Aliyev, recognized that Azerbaijan's "former leadership was also guilty" of the events in Khojaly. In April 1992, according to Bilik-Dunyasy Azeri news service, Aliyev said: "The bloodshed will be to our advantage. We should not interfere in the course of events".**
- **Tamerlan Karayev, former Chairman of Azerbaijan's Supreme Council, said: "The tragedy was committed by the (current) authorities of Azerbaijan"; specifically by "someone very high-ranking"<sup>4</sup>;**
- **Czech journalist Jana Mazalova, who twice was taken by Azeri military authorities (*who controlled the territory where the bodies were found*) to witness what Azerbaijanis alleged as "bodies mutilated by the Armenians", noted a substantial difference between the two visits. Mazalova said she had not seen any traces of mistreatment of the bodies during her first mission, while a couple of days later she was shocked by seeing the same bodies disfigured. Again, this happened on a territory controlled by Azeri armed forces;**

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- **Independent Azeri cameraman Chingiz Mustafayev**, who worked in Khojaly in those days, **began to question the official version of the events. Mustafayev was murdered** under unknown circumstances soon after he openly declared through the "D-press" news-agency his intention to investigate the degree of **Azerbaijan's responsibility for the Khojaly events**;

- In 2005, independent Azeri journalist Ejnulla Fatullayev stated in an interview to the "Monitor" Azeri news agency that he had **"met with Khojaly inhabitants, who confirmed that Armenians were using loudspeakers to warn about the forthcoming operation, and offered them to leave the settlement through a corridor along the river"**. Fatullayev supported the opinion that no one would have survived without the Armenians leaving a corridor. Several days after his interview, Monitor's editor-in-chief Elmar Huseynov was murdered near his apartment, and Fatullayev was imprisoned and accused of treason, drug smuggling and terrorism.

Civilians who were allowed by the Armenians to escape from the battlefield through a safe corridor were attacked near Agdam, seven miles inside the Azeri-controlled territory, by Azerbaijan's then-opposition Popular Front.

*Questions that shed light on the tragedy:*

1. *Who prevented civilian villagers from escaping from the war zone in Azerbaijani-controlled territory?*
2. *Who killed civilians from Khojaly and maimed their bodies on territory fully controlled by Azerbaijan?*
3. *Why everyone in Azerbaijan, who tried to find the truth about Khojaly was either murdered, or imprisoned?*

The autocratic regime in Azerbaijan has been criticized by most human rights organizations and democracies, including the United States, for continued strengthening of authoritarian power and suppressing public dissent. The regime continues to reject responsibility for military aggression against the Artsakh, and the events of Feb. 1992.

The regime continues to use Khojaly events for domestic and international political purposes: to instigate hatred among its own society against everything Armenian, as well as to manipulate international opinion.

The strategy contradicts the US-mediated efforts to strengthen regional stability and confidence between the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples, and postpones positive settlement of the existing regional challenges.

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1. "Ogonek" magazine, Nov. 14-15, 1992
  2. "Nezavisimaya gazeta" (Independent Newspaper), April 2, 1992
  3. "Novoye vremya" (New Time) magazine, March 6, 2001
  4. "Mukhalifat" newspaper, April 28, 1992